

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES

## CHRIST OUR PEACE.

M., Dec. 10. Peace and plenty. 1 Kings 4:20-25.  
 T., Dec. 11. War's judgments. Joel 2:1-14.  
 W., Dec. 12. War of revolt. Judg. 6:1-10.  
 T., Dec. 13. The divine ideal. Luke 2:14.  
 F., Dec. 14. Peace through transformation. Isa. 2:1-4.  
 S., Dec. 15. Earth's hope; justice. 2 Pet. 3:13.  
 Sun., Dec. 16. Topic—Christ Is Our Peace.  
 National Ideals: War or Peace. Which? Isa. 9:6; Eph. 2:14-17.  
 Is war ever justifiable? Give reasons.  
 Can this nation live the Golden Rule? How?  
 What are the effects of war on national character?

There are two great relationships in which man finds himself placed. One is in reference to man; the other as to God. The natural man is at enmity with God, and is very often at enmity with some of his fellow-men.

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To be at enmity with God is the height of folly from any standpoint. Our Saviour tells us that if a general finds that his army is much weaker than that of his enemy, the part of wisdom is to try and make the best terms of peace possible. When we think of puny man being at enmity with the infinite and all-powerful God, it is hard to imagine anything more foolish. What is man that he should take up arms against God, and rebelling against Him, should refuse to obey Him? If it were not that God is very merciful and gracious every sinner would have been blotted out of existence long ago.

God does not want us to be enemies. He wants us to be friends. He sent as a special ambassador to offer terms of peace His own Son, Christ Jesus. The Father and the Son, working together, have provided all that is necessary to secure a perfect peace. The very mission of Christ to the world was to make peace between man and God. This is done by his paying the debt of the sinner, thus satisfying the claim of God against him. He offers the peace thus provided on God's side to the sinner. All the sinner has to do is to express his willingness to accept the terms offered.

We can scarcely conceive of greater folly than for a sinner to refuse the terms of peace which are offered by God, and especially when we remember that God makes this offer only because He loves us. Men do not realize how great are the blessings contained in this offer. It means forgiveness of sins, life everlasting, eternal fellowship with God, a home in the Father's house.

If all men were in the fullest sense at peace with God, there could be no enmity between men. There is no enmity where there is no sin. Unfortunately, there is much sin in the world, and it often manifests itself in enmity.

The question which every Christian ought to consider very earnestly is what he is to do under these conditions. One point can be settled very easily, and that is that there ought to be no enmity in his own heart. If he finds that it is there his first duty is to ask God to help him to get rid of it.

If another holds enmity against him, he must first, if possible, find out the cause of it. If it is through any fault of his own, he should make earnest and faithful effort to remove the cause and show the other that he has done so. If he has in any way wronged the other, he should confess the wrong and ask for forgiveness.

If the fault is with the other person, especially if he is a fellow Christian, our Saviour, in Matthew 18:15-17, tells us how we ought to deal with him. This passage deserves careful study and its principles should be put faithfully into practice.

When we are dealing with those who injure us or are at enmity against us, we should bear in mind the fact that we occupy a twofold relationship to them, a private and a public one. When a man shows enmity against us it may be only a personal matter in which he and we alone are concerned. Then he should be dealt with as already indicated. But if the offence is of a public nature, then another element is brought into the consideration.

If a man in sinning against me, sins against the Church or violates the law of the country, there are two things that I must do. I must personally forgive him, and yet it is my duty to the Church or the State to see that he is properly dealt with. If he were to break into my house and steal from me, it would be my Chris-

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tian duty to forgive him and hold no malice against him, but it would also be my duty to see that he is reported to the civil authorities that he may be properly punished. This must be done for the good of society. If he is a member of the Church the matter should be presented to the Church, that it may take such steps as are necessary to protect itself.

If a man makes a bodily attack upon me, it is my duty to prevent his injuring me, by using force, if necessary. But I have no right to take advantage of my superior strength and inflict upon him any greater injury than is necessary to prevent his injuring me.

In the same way if any one should attack my wife or my child or any one else who needs my protection, it would be my duty to defend them as I would defend myself. It is not only my right, but it is my duty to defend them.

So if any one unjustly attacks my country it is my duty to defend my country. In personal matters I am to judge whether I have been wronged or not. In the case of an attack upon my country, I must be guided in the decision by those who have been placed to rule over the country. If I differ from them I may try to convince them that they are wrong. Failing to do this, I must subject myself "unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. 13:1.)

If I am called to war, I may have no personal grievance against any of the enemy, and yet it is my duty to obey my country's call and go forth and fight its battles. I may not want

to kill any of the enemy, and yet I may do it without sin, if this be necessary to protect my country. In such matters, as a soldier, I do not act personally or in a private capacity. I am an officer or agent of the State, and am enforcing its decrees.  
(Continued on page 14)

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